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Ninth Infantry Division Association

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The Octofoil

April-May-June
2018

Volume LII, No. 2

President's Message

"If we don't remember, who will?"



With the onset of summer, I am excited about the coming 73rd Annual Reunion in Southaven, Mississippi next month. The Reunion Committee, under the leadership of Glenda Baswell, has put together a fine event with several surprises and exciting activities in the finest southern tradition. We have over sixty people registered this year which is more than 2017 reunion, including a new WWII veteran and his family from the 39th Infantry Regiment. This will be the first Association reunion that he has ever attended!

We will have news to report on the reorganization of the Association from 501 (c) (19) veterans organization to a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. Our attorney is ready to submit the necessary paperwork to the IRS. During the membership meeting, we will vote on the final changes to the bylaws to complete the process. You will recall this change has been anticipated for several years with the declining membership of WWII veterans and an increase in non-military members, primarily composed of veteran widows, lineal relatives of veterans and other interested parties. The Association has also received several Vietnam War veterans as new members. (Still our veteran ratio is not enough to maintain the IRS veteran organization status.) In fact, one of our keynote speakers for the Memorial Service fought in Vietnam with the 39th Infantry Regiment. And, no it is not Forrest Gump!

If you have not registered, there is still time. However, the deadline for the group rate for the Hilton Garden Inn at Southaven has closed. We will need to know immediately to ensure that there is adequate food for the Riverboat cruise and Sunday night banquet. If you have not yet made reservations and would like to attend, contact Glenda directly at [REDACTED]

Margi and I look forward to seeing you all again and to meeting our new veterans and Association members in Mississippi.

Terry Barnhart
President, Ninth Infantry Division Association



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OUR MISSION

This Association was formed by the officers and men of the 9th Infantry Division in order to perpetuate the memory of our fallen comrades, to preserve the *esprit de corps* of the Division, to assist in promoting an everlasting world peace exclusively by means of educational activities and to serve as an information bureau about the 9th Infantry Division.



100 YEARS YOUNG



Congratulations to Ernie Micka from the Ninth Infantry Division Association. Ernie is the first member of our 100's Club !

Ernie Micka
3rd Platoon, B Company
15th Engineering Battalion

THE OCTOFOIL

The official publication of The Ninth Infantry Division Association Inc.. Published four times yearly, January-March; April - June; July - September; October - December. Material for publication must be received by the publisher according to the following schedule:

December 20 for the January publication
March 20 for the April publication
June 20 for the July publication
September 20 for the October publication

Effective July 1, 2018, the annual fee for membership, which includes The Octofoil, is thirty five dollars (\$35.00) and must be sent to the Membership Chairperson by check or money order made payable to:

The Ninth Infantry Division Association.

Send payment to: **Clare Irwin**
Membership Chairperson

The Ninth Infantry Division Association Inc. is a registered 501(c)19 Veterans' Organization of the Internal Revenue Code in a determination letter issued in January 1948. Contributions are tax deductible.

Volume LII, No. 2 April, May, June 2018

TIP OF THE HAT

We thank the following members and friends for remembering the Memorial Fund and our buddies who have answered their last Roll Call.

Jorden Family—In memory of Marilyn Martin.

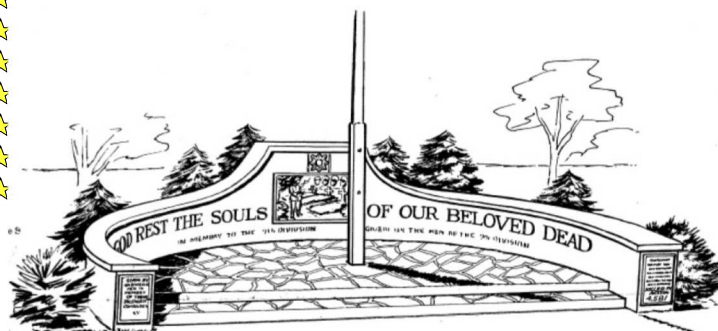
Judy and Only Rishel—In honor of Marilyn Martin, a dear friend and devoted supporter of the Ninth Infantry Division Association.

If you would like to donate, please make your check payable to:

The Ninth Infantry Division Association

Please note in the memo section of the check "Tip of the Hat" and mail to:

Mary Cooper,



IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING YOUR MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL!

As you get ready to renew your annual membership and *The Octofoil* newsletter, you will notice that the new form on page 11 has been revised to reflect the changes that have been made, due to the update of our ByLaws. It is important that you complete the new form and send it in with your payment. Rather than writing two checks, you will now only need to write one for \$35.00. As the new form indicates, if you have paid for a Life Membership, you will only need to pay \$20.00 to cover the cost of *The Octofoil*.

Your payment and the completed form should be mailed to our membership chairperson, Clare Irwin. If you have any questions, please contact Clare at [REDACTED]

Friends of Father Connors Fund

The Friends of Father Connors Fund would like to thank the following new donors for their generous contributions:

Herb Stern— In memory of Joe Maiale and honor of William Sauers, for their skills and efforts to keep our Association sound and on a forward path.

Paul Schumacher and Family— In fond remembrance of the life of Ellen Schumacher and for the countless exciting events and fun-filled days we had together from 6 November, 1925 to 7 May, 2008.

The current balance in the FFCF is \$864.61

Continued contributions for maintenance and lighting expenses would be greatly appreciated.

If you would like to donate please make your check payable to: **The Ninth Infantry Division Association.** Please note in the memo section of the check "FFCF" and send to :

Mary Cooper,

**THE NINTH INFANTRY DIVISION STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENSES
NET SURPLUS (DEFICIT) - INCOME TAX BASIS FROM 07/01/17 TO 03/31/18**

Prepared by Mize Houser and Co. P.A.

<u>Revenue</u>	<u>Current Qtr.</u>	<u>YTD</u>
General Fund Income	\$179	\$825
Octofoil Fund Income	180	1,505
Memorial Fund Income	250	1,350
FFCF Income	0	55
72nd—2017 Reunion	0	2,725
73rd—2018 Reunion	<u>4,800</u>	<u>4,800</u>
Total Revenue	\$ 5,409	\$11,260
<u>Expenses</u>		
Postage Expenses	\$117	396
Refunds	0	275
Printing and Copies	219	918
Supplies	0	551
Accounting Expense	0	1,500
Entertainment	267	820
Food/Catering	1,383	3,877
Memorial Service	0	488
Donations	0	1,300
Veterans Travel Expense	0	1,650
Total Expenses	<u>\$1,984</u>	<u>\$11,774</u>
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	\$3,424	(514)

**THE NINTH INFANTRY DIVISION STATEMENT OF ASSETS, LIABILITIES
AND EQUITY-INCOME TAX BASIS 03/31/18**

ASSETS

Current Assets	
General Fund Cash	\$24,467
Octofoil Subscription Cash	8,909
Octofoil Library Project Cash	615
Memorial Fund Cash	5,059
FFCF Cash	715
Veterans Travel Fund	1,625
Reunion Insurance Fund	5,000
69th—2014 Reunion Cash	4,280
70th—2015 Reunion Cash	3,062
71st—2016 Reunion Cash	2,592
72nd—2017 Reunion	4,407
73rd—2018 Reunion	3,151
Total Current Assets	\$65,566
TOTAL ASSETS	\$65,566

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Net Assets	
Unrestricted Net Assets—Beg	\$66,080
Current Surplus (Deficit)	(514)
Total Net Assets	\$65,566
TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	\$65,566

For balances in all sub-accounts as of June 1, 2018, see page 6.



TAPS SOUNDED

The muffled drum's sad roll has beat the soldier's last tattoo;
No more on life's parade shall meet that brave and fallen few.
On Fame's eternal camping—ground their silent tents are spread,
And Glory guards, with solemn round, the bivouac of the dead.

Bivouac of the Dead by Theodore O'Hare - 1847

9th Infantry Division Medal of Honor Recipients World War II

S/Sgt. Herschel F. Briles, Co. C, 899th TD Bn; Near Scherpenseel, Germany; 20 November 1944
2nd Lieutenant John E. Butts*, Co. E, 60th Infantry; Normandy, France; 14, 16, 23 June 1944
T/Sgt. Peter J. Dalessandro, Co. E, 39th Infantry; Near Kalterherberg, Germany; 22 December 1944
Sgt. William J. Nelson*, Co. H, 60th Infantry; Djegel Dardys, NW of Sedjenane, Tunisia; 24 April 1943
PFC Carl V. Sheridan*, Co. K, 47th Infantry; Frenzerberg Castle, Germany; 26 November 1944
Captain Matt L. Urban, 2nd Battalion, 60th Infantry; Renouf, France; 14 June to 3 September, 1944
* Posthumous award

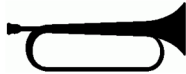
Source: U.S. Army Center of Military History

Vietnam War

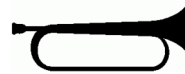
SGT Sammy L. Davis, Battery C, 2nd Battalion, 4th Artillery; West of Cai Lay; 18 November 1967
SP4 Edward A. Devore, Jr.*, Company B, 4th Battalion, 39th Infantry; Near Saigon; 17 March 1968
PFC James W. Fous*, Company E, 4th Battalion, 47th Infantry; Kien Hoa Province; 14 May 1968
SSG Don J. Jenkins, Company A, 2nd Battalion, 39th Infantry; Kien Phong Province; 6 January 1969
SGT Leonard B. Keller, Company A, 3rd Battalion, 60th Infantry; Ap Bac Zone; 2 May 1967
SP4 Thomas J. Kinsman, Company B, 3rd Battalion, 60th Infantry; Near Vinh Long; 6 February 1968
SP4 George C. Lang, Company A, 4th Battalion, 47th Infantry; Kien Hoa Province; 22 February 1969
PFC David P. Nash*, Company B, 2nd Battalion, 39th Infantry; Giao Duc District; 29 December 1968
SP5 Clarence E. Sasser, Headquarters Co., 3rd Battalion, 60th Infantry; Ding Tuong Province; 10 January 1968
SP4 Raymond R. Wright, Company A, 3rd Battalion, 60th Infantry; Ap Bac Zone; 2 May 1967
* Posthumous award

Sources: A Short History of the 9th Infantry Division and
www.homeofheroes.com

Anthony Ralph DeRobertis
L Co. 47th Inf. Regt.



Marilyn Martin
Widow of Billie Martin



Karen G. Olsen
Daughter of Herb Olsen

TAPS LETTERS

TAPS LETTERS



PFC Anthony Ralph DeRobertis
L Company, 47th Infantry Regiment
September 24, 1923 – October 17, 2017

It was December 8th, 1941, the day after Pearl Harbor and three brothers ran down to the enlisting office to sign up for duty. Vitoduccio (Vito), the oldest, Bartholomeo (Bart), the youngest and my Dad, Anthony (Tony) were ready to fight overseas. Vito joined the Army, Bart joined the Navy and Tony was rejected. Tony was blind in one eye.

But Tony was determined to fight for his country. Each week he would travel to the enlisting station. First the Army, then the Navy, then the Marines, but he was rejected each time. One day he was at the Army recruiting office. It was near lunch time and the doctor was examining him. The doctor asked "How's your vision?" Tony lied. "My vision is fine". The doctor said, "It is lunch time, let's skip the exam and get some lunch". Tony's next stop was boot camp.

During training, Tony got the nickname "Chow-hound". He loved to eat anything and everything. Yet, he never gained weight. He was, till his last day on earth, always full of energy, ready to keep busy on any task he could get his hands on and always enjoying his food. You could find him with a weed wacker in one hand and his walker in the other.

During the invasion, his brother, Bart, was on one of the ships

carrying the men to Normandy. My Dad landed at Utah Beach with the "Old Reliables" aka the Ninth Division. He was always proud to be a part of this courageous group of men. They were his heroes. They fought hard traveling through Europe. From Saint Lo and Cherbourg, France they moved on. His 47th Regiment was the first to break through the Siegfried Line. Through the Hürtgen Forest, they fought. Through the freezing cold and near starvation during the Battle of the Bulge, they pressed on.

At the Ludendorff Bridge at Remagen, my Dad was wounded. From my research, he was probably patched up at the 51st Field Hospital in Roetgen, Germany. The lieutenant told him that the war was over for him, and he would be stationed at the hospital. My Dad wanted to go back to his friends on the front line. The lieutenant refused, so my Dad took his gun and, in anger, shot through the lieutenant's window. Dad got his wish and was back with "L" Company and the Raiders.

Upon his arrival, my Dad learned that a letter was sent home to his family telling them that he was killed in action. Of course, a man of few words, spoken and written, he never told his family that he was still alive. After the war, he returned home only to discover that his family moved to another location. He had no idea where to go to find them. Luck was with him the day he returned. His younger sister was out shopping and was in for a big surprise. There was her brother walking down the avenue searching for his family. Now Tony was in for a bigger surprise. Since everybody thought he was dead, they gave away all of his belongings.

One day traveling to work on the New York subway, an old buddy from the war saw him and almost passed out from fear. He thought he was seeing a ghost because he was told that my



Dad was dead. To my Dad's amusement, in one of the WW II books he owns, he is listed as killed in action. One evening in 1951 my Dad went to a dance at Roseland Ballroom in Manhattan. There she was, the woman of his dreams. His first words to her were "I am going to marry you". My Mom told me that her first thoughts were "over my dead body". A year later, Rose and Tony were married and stayed together until October 17, 2017 when Tony went on to his greatest adventure. After his wife, Rose, and his two sons, baseball was my Dad's great love. Joe DiMaggio and the Bronx Bombers, a few beers in the bleachers were like being in heaven. Coaching CYO Peewee Baseball was another joy in his life. If his team won a game, he would take all of the kids out for an ice cream soda. Sometimes he even took them out when they lost a tough game. Eventually, Dad became the commissioner for the CYO Peewee League. He checked the roster on every team and made sure every child played at least two innings. No one was allowed to sit on the bench for an entire game. Tony was also a member of his local chapter of the Ninth Infantry Division Association. Over the years it was an honor to accompany him at their Memorial Day and Veteran Day ceremonies. We also attended reunions, dinners and picnics. In 1992, he served as the New York Chapter's president. The best part was the conversations, eating the cold cuts and sharing a beer or two with his friends.

My Dad had fond memories of WW II Chaplain, Father De Laura. He spoke about how Father invited anyone, no matter their faith to attend Mass. Father was also instrumental in getting my Dad a pass for a Little "R and R". I believe it was because of Father De Laura, my Dad had a special place in his heart for all priests. Dad and I attended an "Evening of Reflection" sponsored by our Knights of Columbus council. Our guest speaker was Father Kaminski who was a combat chaplain during Desert Storm. Father

Kaminski spoke about his experiences during the war. He mentioned the difficulties that the men and women in our military encountered. Father Kaminski told us about how they had to wash in cold water. My dad whispered in my ear "What water?" Father next spoke about the hard beds or cots the men slept on. Dad whispered "What beds?" Finally Father said the food was tasteless. Dad whispered again in my ear, "What food?" War is very hard but nothing compares to what our Greatest Generation had to endure during World War II.

In 2010, I was part of a committee who helped build a Veteran's Memorial at our church. My Dad was given the flag at our very first ceremony. We never missed a ceremony and at one time my Dad had the opportunity to say a few words. He spoke about his friends who were lost during the war.

Over the years Tony was featured in our local newspaper and TV news station. He was greatly loved, and at his funeral, a multitude of members from the Knights of Columbus attended along with our State Senator, State Representative and members of his church. He was also honored with the Knights of Columbus Color Corps guarding his coffin.

What my dad learned in the war he shared with his children. He had many wise sayings, which he taught us. When we learned how to drive a car he would say "If you got an inch – take it! That is what the Ninth Division did during the war." He also learned from his time overseas that one may have to improvise to get a job done. He would say "Take a look at it from another angle". My favorite saying of his is "You can't argue with a crazy person". All in all, what we, his two sons and five grandchildren, learned most from him is family first, faith in God, love of country, honesty, integrity and loyalty.

"Ex Virtute Honos" "Honor Comes From Virtue"

TAPS OBITUARIES



Marilyn Martin
1927-2018
Widow of Billie Martin
(26th Field Artillery)

Marilyn Martin, 90, wife of the late Billie Martin (26th Field Artillery) died after a lengthy illness on April 2, 2018. She was in The Villages, Florida with her daughter, Linda, at the time of her death. Marilyn was born in Detroit, Michigan on November 16, 1927 to Ervin and Mable Posey and lived in Beverly Hills, Michigan.

She was a long time member of the Association with her husband and continued to attend the reunions after his death in 2002. She loved to play pinochle and was a member of three card clubs in Michigan. Marilyn is fondly remembered playing cards at the reunions with Only and Judy Rishel along with daughter Linda.

She was a very generous woman and loved to spend time with her extended family. Her family has many memories spending time together at a beach house in Virginia Beach provided by "Grandma Marilyn". She left a legacy of love and gifts for all. She began her Christmas shopping in April. She was astute at finding items on sale and was extremely effectively in using coupons to maximize savings.

Marilyn is survived by her daughter Linda (Robert) Jorden and son Jerry (Janeen) Emerick; 3 grandchildren and 7 great grandchildren.

TAPS OBITUARIES



Karen G. Olsen
Daughter of Herb Olsen
(G Company, 47th Infantry Regiment)

Karen G. Olsen, 63, of Marstons Mills, MA died at Cape Cod Hospital on May 30.

Originally from Randolph, MA, she was the daughter of the late Herbert and Pauline (Mortelliti) Olsen, and the sister of the late Carla Olsen Good.

Karen graduated from Catherine Laboure College in Boston with a degree in nursing. Immediately after graduation, she worked as an R.N. at Carney Hospital, and then moved to Cape Cod and continued her extensive nursing career at Cape Cod Hospital. Karen's love and dedication to children was expressed through her work in the pediatric and maternity departments where she has worked for close to 40 years until her death.

Karen was a travel bug and would jump at the opportunity to explore new places near and far, sometimes at a moment's notice. She loved the Red Sox and Celtics, and could often be found at games throughout the sports seasons. Karen was a talented tap dancer, trained as a toddler and performing semi-professionally on Cape Cod in many stage shows. On her time off, you could find Karen on some of her favorite beaches on Cape Cod and Florida, or playing tennis. Most of all, Karen loved her extended family and hundreds of friends. Her life was full of things to do and people to see. Karen also loved her two dogs, Lola and Capri.

Donations in Karen's memory may be made to Cape Cod Hospital Maternity and VNA Hospice, c/o Cape Cod Healthcare Foundation, P.O. Box 370, Hyannis, MA 02601.



**Hürtgen Forest Battleground Tour 2018
October 3-9**

Our European friends are planning the 4th Annual Meeting of survivors and their relatives of the German-Allied Battle of the Hürtgen Forest in the fall of 1944. The Hürtgen Forest is located in western Germany near Belgium and is where Ninth Infantry Division took terrible losses during this battle prior to the spring offensive to the Rhine River and the end of the war. In previous years, several members of our Association have attended and said it was a wonderful, educational experience.

There is no registration fee, but participants are expected to pay for their lodging, drinks, food, and also participate in the cost for three days of bus transportation and other group expenses (estimated at 50 Euros/day/person). There is a list of several recommended hotels in Duren, Germany where reservations can be made. The Hotel Rotes Einhorn will be main meeting point and where the bus excursions will start. Albert Trostorf and his group have several presentations, museum and battlefield tours planned with options. A complete itinerary is on page 10.

All units that comprised the 9th Infantry Division in WWII and Vietnam have been merged and assigned to one of the ten categories listed below. For the 73rd Reunion Memorial service, ten short-stemmed white carnations will be placed on the wreath to honor the casualties suffered by the 9th Division in WWII and Vietnam, and to recognize the veterans who served in those units.

Paul Schumacher,
Reunion Planning Committee Member

Balance in all sub-accounts as of June 1, 2018

Account	Balance
General	24,832.10
Octofoil	8,924.44
Library Project	614.59
Memorial Fund	5,709.00
F.F.C.F.	864.61
Reunion Insurance Fund	5,000.00
2013 Reunion	1,685.63
2014 Reunion	4,279.71
2015 Reunion	2,882.08
2016 Reunion	2,772.27
2017 Reunion	4,406.78
2018 Reunion	7,728.68
Vets Travel Fund	1,625.00
TOTAL	71,324.89
Respectfully submitted, Mary Cooper	

Units of the 9th Infantry Division

1. Division Headquarters

A. Band
B. Military Police
C. Reconnaissance
D. Quartermaster

E. Intelligence
F. Signal
G. Ordnance
H. Supply and Transportation

2. The Combat Infantry

A. 39th Infantry Regiment
B. 47th Infantry Regiment

C. 60th Infantry Regiment
D. 31st Infantry Regiment

3. Division Artillery

A. 26th Field Artillery
B. 34th Field Artillery
C. 60th Field Artillery

D. 84th Field Artillery
E. 4th Artillery
F. 11th Artillery

4. 15th Engineer Combat Battalion

5. Ninth Medical Battalion

6. Attached Units

A. 899th Tank Destroyer Battalion
B. 746th Tank Battalion

C. 376 AAA Battalion

7. 3rd Squadron, 5th Cavalry

8. DISCOM, Division Troops

A. 1st Brigade
B. 2nd Brigade

C. 3rd Brigade

9. 9th Aviation Battalion

10. 709th Maintenance Battalion



Battle of Hürtgen Forest: The 9th Infantry Division Suffered in the Heavily Armed Woods

By Mark Reardon-Reprinted from the 2006 issue of World War II magazine

Hürtgen. If a single word can cause a U.S. Army veteran of the European theater to shudder, it would be that. The foreboding image of dark forests, steep hills, voracious mud, pillboxes, constant rain and shells bursting in treetops immediately comes to mind. It was the sort of battlefield where soldiers walked a few feet from their foxholes and were never seen again.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the GIs who endured that hell on earth would prefer to push such awful memories out of their minds and may explain why, in the years since, the story of the Hürtgen Forest battles remains a historical stepchild of more glorious encounters such as D-Day and the Battle of the Bulge. What little has been done on Hürtgen has often focused on the November 1944 battles involving the 28th Infantry Division and has ignored the horrible prelude to the "Bloody Bucket's" mauling, which occurred over 10 days in October.

The struggle for the 50 square miles of heavily wooded and hilly terrain south of Aachen actually began in mid-September. With their supply line stretched to the breaking point, the Allies' rapid advance through France had finally slowed down at the Siegfried Line, the formidable defensive belt that blocked Germany's western border and guarded the entrance to the Ruhr Valley. Hoping to seize Aachen and establish a firm breach in the Siegfried Line



A newsreel cameraman follows a squad of infantrymen as they disappear into the trees of the Hürtgen Forest at the start of the attack. The 9th Division's assault was intended as a diversion in support of the First Army's drive on Aachen. What the Americans did not know was that hidden in the woods were thousands of German soldiers eager for an opportunity to administer a strong counterblow that would blunt the Allied drive into the Third Reich.

before winter's onset, Maj. Gen. J. Lawton Collins, commanding VII Corps, ordered Maj. Gen. Louis A. Craig's 9th Infantry Division to seize the villages of Hürtgen and Kleinhau. After some initial progress, the American drive stalled when two of Craig's regiments were diverted north to assist the 3rd Armored Division, which was embroiled in a brutal battle at the Aachen suburb of Stolberg.

In early October, Craig was ordered to resume his attack in the Hürtgen Forest. Now, however, he would have to do so minus his 47th Infantry Regiment, which remained in support of the 3rd Armored, and with understrength units sent from the fighting around Aachen. To further complicate matters, Collins made it clear that the 9th Division's effort was regarded only as

secondary — supporting the Allies' main attack at Aachen. That meant Craig would be at the bottom of the list for reinforcements, artillery or air support, though the general took some comfort knowing he was not expected to begin his assault until three days after VII Corps began its renewed push toward Aachen.

The villages of Germeter and Vossenack, as well as the cross-roads settlement of Reichelskaul, were designated as the 9th Division's initial objectives. Lieutenant Colonel Van H. Bond's 39th Infantry Regiment would attack on the left. Once it had occupied Germeter, the 39th would seize Vossenack while guarding against an enemy counterattack from the north. Meanwhile, after capturing Reichelskaul, Colonel John G. Van Houten's 60th Infantry Regiment would reorient itself to the south to guard against a German counterthrust from the direction of Monschau. The division would then push on against the town of Schmidt. Jump-off time was originally set for October 5 but was later postponed for 24 hours.

The initial thrust would be conducted by four battalions. In addition to support from two regimental cannon companies, Craig had four divisional howitzer battalions along with three battalions of reinforcing artillery, for a grand total of 96 pieces. A company of 4.2-inch mortars was attached to each regiment, along with a company each from supporting tank (746th) and tank destroyer (899th) battalions.

Against this small force were the Landsers of Maj. Gen. Hans Schmidt's 275th Infantry Division, which had briefly fought north of Aachen before being transferred to the Hürtgen in late September to fill a gap between the 12th Volksgrenadier Division and the 353rd Infantry Division. On October 1, LXXIV Army Corps directed Schmidt to take over the entire Hürtgen sector, including the area occupied by the 353rd. As the 353rd's headquarters and service units departed, its combat units were absorbed by the 275th. Schmidt also received the 353rd's artillery component, giving him a total of 25 pieces, as well as six assault guns from Sturmgeschütz Brigade 902.

Schmidt's division had originally consisted of a pair of grenadier (mechanized infantry) regiments: GR 983 led by a Colonel Schmitz and GR 984 commanded by Colonel Joachim Heintz. Schmidt deployed Schmitz's men in reserve while assigning the northern sector to Heintz. The center was allocated to one of the 353rd's former units, Lt. Col. Friedrich Tröster's GR 942, while the southern sector was the responsibility of Colonel Feind's GR Replacement and Training Battalion 253. Feind commanded 1,000 men and was placed along the weakest portion of the line.

The Americans knew few of these details when they began their attack at 1000 hours on October 6. Craig opened with fighter-bombers striking at otherwise invisible targets that U.S. artillery units had marked with columns of red smoke. Once the planes departed, there was a five-minute preparatory artillery barrage, then the U.S. foot soldiers began surging forward.

Assaulting the extreme northern end of the line held by GR 253, the 1st and 3rd battalions of Colonel Bond's 39th Infantry gained 1,000 yards while suffering 29 casualties. Lieutenant Colonel Oscar H. Thompson's 1st Battalion attacked with A and B companies in the lead, trailed by C Company. Captain Jack Dunlap's B Company drew first blood when it overran an outpost and killed or captured 30 men. Crossing a creek, Dunlap's men pushed on until they encountered several pillboxes, whereupon he decided to hold up for the night. Thompson then brought his other companies on line and waited for daylight.

On the 1st Battalion's northern flank, Lt. Col. Richard H. Stumpf's

3rd Battalion of the 39th Infantry advanced with L Company on the left and K Company on the right, with I Company in reserve. For the first 1,000 yards, the lead companies met only sniper and small-arms fire, but by late afternoon, heavier resistance had begun to build. Although L Company reduced an enemy strongpoint without too much delay, K Company was pinned down by accurate fire from a position southeast of the battalion sector. As evening approached, Stumpf decided to hold in place until darkness to allow K Company to safely disengage. General Schmidt was sufficiently alarmed by American progress in this sector to order Captain Riedel's Fusilier Battalion 275 to launch a counterattack against the Americans the next morning.

Colonel Van Houten's 60th Infantry attacked enemy defenses southwest of Reichelskaul. On the left, Major Lawrence Decker's 2nd Battalion moved forward 500 yards before its lead platoons were pinned down. Every attempt to advance ended in failure and heavy losses. By the time the attack petered out, 130 of Decker's officers and men had become casualties.

To the right, Van Houten's 3rd Battalion of the 60th soon encountered difficulties of its own. After a short eastward advance, the battalion ran into a pillbox which, together with heavy mortar fire and a strong enemy response on the left flank, occupied the attention of two of Van Houten's companies for the remainder of the day. By nightfall, however, K Company was able to move about 1,000 yards to the southeast. At 1600 hours, the colonel directed that his 1st Battalion, commanded by Lt. Col. Lee Chatfield, move north until it linked with the 39th Infantry. At daybreak Chatfield would launch an attack to the east in order to outflank the Germans, barring Decker's advance.

Both sides were prepared to launch their own attacks at almost the same time. Fusilier Battalion 275 went forward only to encounter Americans who had been expecting some sort of reaction to their previous day's advance. Captain Riedel was wounded and the survivors of his unit pinned down. Captain Dunlap took advantage of the situation by infiltrating GIs into the woods just west of Germeter, but Colonel Thompson would not let him enter the village for fear it would expose his B Company to counterattacking panzers.

By noon the 1st Battalion had succeeded in bypassing II/GR 942. Schmidt reacted by deploying Landesschützen Battalion I/9 to the rear of II/GR 942. The American success also convinced him that "the southernmost elements of GR 253 defending a line of West Wall bunkers were thus in danger of being enveloped from the rear." Schmidt ordered Colonel Feind to block off the threat of a further enemy penetration in that sector. In response, U.S. Engineer Battalions 16 and 275 occupied positions between Reichelskaul and Raffelsbrand while three companies of Engineer Battalion 73 dug in along the Hürtgen-Germeter road.

During the night of October 7-8, Colonel Schmitz sent reinforcements to the aid of GR 253. Fortress Infantry Battalion 1412 and Luftwaffe Fortress Battalion 5 were also dispatched by LXXIV Army Corps to reinforce the 275th. In addition Schmidt received two companies of civilian police from Düren, hurriedly issued with army uniforms and rifles. He combined the police into an ad hoc formation named Battalion Hennecke (after its commander). Several howitzer batteries from the 89th Infantry Division, an anti-aircraft artillery regiment and elements of an artillery corps were ordered to occupy positions where they could augment the fire of Major Sturm's Artillery Regiment 275.

The 39th Infantry planned to renew its advance at 0800 hours, but a heavy barrage began falling on its lead battalions an hour before the attack was to begin. The 3rd Battalion suffered a serious setback when its L Company commander was killed and casualties disorganized his unit. Immediately following the barrage, a

German force of 150 to 200 men counterattacked the 1st Battalion but was repelled by Captain Ralph Edgar's A Company. The Germans then shifted their efforts farther north, hitting L and I companies. Colonel Bond sent G Company from the 2nd Battalion, which quickly overran three enemy machine guns. The loss of the automatic weapons seemed to take the fight out of the Germans, who retired to the east. Thirty German soldiers were killed during the engagement, and 27 others, including a wounded company commander, were captured. With fresh troops and additional artillery, Feind planned to launch a coordinated counterthrust at dawn, using I/GR 983 and Engineer Battalion 275. His intended target was Colonel Chatfield's 1st Battalion, 60th Infantry, now located



A column of GIs ascends a hill and enters the forest. Many of the men sent into the woods as replacements were unprepared for what they would face. An Army historian later noted, "Any numerical advantage the Americans may have possessed lay in bug-eyed replacements, who began to arrive in small, frightened bunches."

just west of Reichelskaul. Advancing northwest from Simonskaul, the German counterattack crumbled when it came under intense mortar, artillery and small-arms fire.

After thwarting the enemy counterattack, Bond ordered his lead elements to resume their advance at 1100 hours. Bolstered by the arrival of supporting tanks, L and I companies moved forward. By 1215 hours, L Company had gained 200 yards and captured three pillboxes. The 3rd Battalion's progress slowed and finally came to a halt shortly before 1800 hours. Still lacking supporting tanks, Thompson's 1st Battalion did not attempt to advance across the open ground surrounding Germeter. The 1st Battalion, 60th Infantry, launched its own attack against the Reichelskaul road junction at 1100 hours and was met by intense artillery and mortar fire. B Company, accompanied by several tanks, was able to detour north into the 39th's zone of operations before veering back east again. This small force pushed to within sight of the crossroads before holding up for the night. The 2nd Battalion, however, was unsuccessful in overcoming the enemy to its front. Although the Germans had been pushed back, two days into the attack the Americans had yet to defeat the 275th, which continued to maintain an unbroken line of resistance. The bloodletting would continue. During the night, Van Houten made plans to push eastward now that supporting tanks and tank destroyers had linked with his leading elements. Led by a platoon of M4 Shermans from the 746th Tank Battalion, Van Houten's 1st Battalion pushed out into open ground south of Germeter at daybreak.

The 39th joined the attack at 0700 hours, but without artillery preparation. This time, supporting tanks were available and actively engaged. The 1st Battalion made a short advance to the edge of the clearing surrounding Germeter before being brought to a halt. C Company suffered particularly heavy casualties when it attempted to breach a barbed wire entanglement. Only the tanks attached to B Company were in position to place effective fire on the enemy defenders. By 1900 hours, a platoon from C Company finally succeeded in working several men close enough to the outskirts of Germeter to begin exchanging hand grenades with the Germans. Unable to support them however, at nightfall Thompson ordered them to pull back.

The 3rd Battalion moved out 45 minutes behind the 1st. As it advanced, the sound of tracked vehicles could be heard near Wittscheidt, and for the rest of the afternoon occasional high-velocity rounds exploded in treetops throughout the battalion's sector. Despite enemy sniper fire, I Company was able to occupy Wittscheidt by 1615 hours. With darkness approaching, Colonel Stumpf decided to halt his advance. To forestall the possibility of an armored counterattack from the direction of Hürtgen, he directed I Company to mine the road leading to Wittscheidt and to register artillery on all likely enemy routes of approach.

Any plan to resume the advance the next day was forestalled by a dawn counterattack by Battalion Hennecke that overwhelmed two platoons from I Company, capturing 41 men. The German success meant that Bond would have to spend the rest of the day just trying to retake the ground he had lost. The 1st Battalion likewise did not attack as planned. Each time Thompson's men tried to move forward they received accurate small-arms fire as well as direct fire from German self-propelled guns.

Things went somewhat better for the 60th Infantry. The 1st Battalion pushed off at noon to seize the Raffelsbrand road junction south of Germeter. In what seemed to be a nightmarish repetition of the opening days of the attack, the thinned ranks of hungry and bone-weary GIs trudged forward while steadily losing men to incoming fire. The situation changed dramatically when one of the lead companies overcame a German pillbox covering the road between Reichelskaul and Raffelsbrand. Buoyed by success, the Americans pushed southward, collecting 100 prisoners and securing their objective by nightfall. With Raffelsbrand in American hands, Van Houten ordered the 3rd Battalion to redeploy to Reichelskaul to protect Chatfield's rear and maintain pressure on German units massing southeast of Germeter.

The loss of the road junction persuaded Schmidt that he needed additional troops. LXXIV Army Corps agreed to loan two rifle companies from the 89th Infantry Division, provided they were used only along the threatened southern flank. The reinforcements would not arrive until dawn on October 11, however, and in the meantime Schmidt sent a company each from GR 983 and GR 984 to strengthen Colonel Feind's GR 253. The Americans' position was also somewhat precarious. With no reserves available, Van Houten had nothing to send to Chatfield's aid. To the east, the 2nd Battalion, 60th Infantry, was still being held back by the stubborn defenders of II/GR 942. To the north, the 39th Infantry remained stalled outside Wittscheidt and Germeter.

October 11 brought success and failure for both sides. American attempts to exploit success at Raffelsbrand produced nothing but longer casualty lists. A German counterattack struck Chatfield's men before daylight, and though beaten back, Chatfield reported that "the enemy maintained pressure

here for the rest of the day and crowned it before dark with a bayonet charge." When the Americans tried to bring up reinforcements, they were pinned down by several pillboxes along the Reichelskaul-Raffelsbrand road that they had bypassed the previous day.

The 1st Battalion, 39th Infantry, was finally able to enter Germeter but found that its defenders had abandoned their positions during the night. Hoping to seize more ground, Thompson ordered Captain Edgar's A Company, supported by Lieutenant Robert Sherwood's 1st Platoon of C/746th Tank Battalion, to probe eastward toward Vossenack. The column had only covered 500 or so yards when a Panzerschreck knocked out the lead tank, and the remaining American armor and infantry withdrew. A subsequent advance by A Company under cover of smoke ended with the destruction of two more Shermans.

The Americans had some success to the north and west of Germeter. Leaving I Company behind to protect the northern approaches to the town, K and L companies encountered little resistance as they moved eastward from Wittscheidt. By late afternoon, Stumpf's battalion had advanced nearly a mile and was preparing to attack Vossenack from a ridge northeast of the village. The 2nd Battalion was also able to advance.

Craig's men had at least been gradually moving forward, but ominous events had occurred during the night that would soon threaten what little progress they had made. Accompanied by the LXXIV Corps commander, Lt. Gen. Erich Straube, Seventh Army commander Lt. Gen. Erich Brandenburger visited Schmidt's command post. After hearing a candid assessment of the situation, Brandenburger promised to send Regiment Wegelein, a unit composed of well-trained and well-equipped troops to the front. Numbering 161 officers and 1,639 enlisted/officer cadets, the force was organized with three battalions of three companies each and a regimental heavy-weapons company. Its commander, Colonel Helmuth Wegelein, was an experienced leader.

Schmidt and Wegelein quickly agreed that a counterattack against the northern flank of the Americans had the best chance of producing favorable results. Wegelein would launch his assault from an assembly area near Hürtgen, advancing southwest until he isolated the American battalions near Germeter.

Following a brief but concentrated artillery preparation, Wegelein's men advanced from their positions just before dawn, moving purposefully along the wooded plateau paralleling the Germeter-Hürtgen road. A platoon of dismounted armor crewmen from 746th Tank Battalion, securing a roadblock along the left flank of 2nd Battalion, 39th Infantry, was the first to encounter this new threat and was quickly scattered. By 0700 hours, Wegelein had succeeded in isolating several of Lt. Col. Gunn's rifle companies. As testament to the isolation caused by the densely wooded terrain, the 39th's 3rd Battalion was completely unaware that the nearby 1st Battalion was being cut to pieces.

Lacking reserves to blunt the enemy thrust, Colonel Bond requested help from General Craig, who directed elements of the divisional reconnaissance troop — augmented by a platoon of light tanks — to assist the embattled 39th Infantry. As the situation grew more serious, Craig ordered the 47th Infantry at Schevenhütte to dispatch two rifle companies and a company of medium tanks from the 3rd Armored Division to reinforce Bond. Rushed to the point of greatest crisis, these reinforcements were finally able to halt the German advance when it reached the road leading west out of Germeter.

The abortive counterattack cost the Germans nearly 500 casualties, with little to show in return. The failed operation, however, produced at least one positive result for the Germans: Surprised by the strength and intensity of their assault, Bond ordered Stumpf's battalion to abandon its plans to attack Vossenack in order to reduce the salient Wegelein had created.

Schmidt planned on renewing the counterattack on October 13, but orders from LXXIV Army Corps directed the immediate removal of all officer candidates from the combat zone, which cut in half what remained of Wegelein's unit and forced him to spend badly needed time reorganizing his remaining personnel. While he was doing so, the 3rd Battalion, 39th Infantry, launched an attack of its own against Wegelein's troops. K Company led the effort, trailed by L Company. As the latter moved up on line, both of its leading platoons were ambushed and wiped out. K Company maneuvered to attack the enemy facing L Company while the 1st Battalion sent B and C companies into the fight. Another counterattack inflicted heavy losses on the right platoon of Dunlap's company, but the American advance continued.

At 1730 hours, a German bearing a white flag approached B Company and requested a brief cease-fire while his unit prepared to surrender. Dunlap sent the man back with a message that he would hold his fire for five minutes. When the German emissary did not reappear within the stated time, B Company resumed its advance, only to run into a torrent of small-arms fire. It was now almost dark, and the enemy seemed to be on all sides. Fearing that his exhausted company was losing its cohesion, Dunlap ordered his men to fall back a short distance and dig in.

Facing four enemy battalions at Raffelsbrand, the 1st Battalion, 60th Infantry, was experiencing its own difficulties. Just before dawn, a surprise German attack seized a pillbox occupied by C Company. Although the seven GIs inside were able to escape, a counterattack by 30 men was unable to regain the position. Three Sherman tanks and two infantry companies eventually arrived to lend a hand, but even with those reinforcements, a heavy crossfire from several machine guns prevented the Americans from making any progress. One of the tanks was hit by an antitank rocket that wounded several men and forced the crew to evacuate the vehicle. A daring German soldier then ran out to the tank and drove it behind a nearby pillbox before the Americans could react. With this, the Americans lost all momentum, and at 1730 hours they began to fall back, suffering heavy casualties from enemy artillery and mortar fire.

That evening Wegelein went to Schmidt's headquarters to protest orders for a renewed advance on the morning of October 14, stating that communications to his battalions and companies were so poor there was a risk that all units might not receive a regimental order. Schmidt replied that he would accuse Wegelein of cowardice if he did not resume his attacks.

Determined to show that he was no coward, Wegelein spent a busy night personally delivering the orders to his units. He still had more visits to make as the sun rose on the 14th. At 0800 hours, however, the colonel was shot and killed by a sergeant from the U.S. 39th Infantry, and his regimental adjutant was captured moments later.

The fighting sputtered on and off for two more days, but it was clear that both sides were too exhausted to achieve significant results. At a cost of 4,410 casualties, the Americans succeeded in pushing their front line an average of 3,500 yards to the east. Nonbattle losses (sickness, injury, etc.) for American units totaled nearly 1,000. The toll for the defenders was also high — approximately 2,000 killed or wounded and 1,308 prisoners. After breaking off the offensive, Collins made the questionable claim that the sacrifices of Craig's men had drawn off German units that could have been thrown into the battle for Aachen. Although it is true that 19 German infantry and engineer battalions opposed six American infantry battalions, many of the defending units were much smaller than their counterparts. In any case, though the Hürtgen fighting might have prevented some German units from being sent to Aachen, their redeployment would not have altered that city's eventual fate.

More important, given the experience of the 9th Division during the opening phase of the battle, the larger question is why senior American leaders such as Generals Courtney Hodges, Omar Bradley and Dwight D. Eisenhower chose in November 1944 to send division after division into the dark and foreboding woods right until the start of the German Ardennes offensive that December. By the time major combat operations in the area finally ceased, six U.S. divisions had been fed into the meat grinder and some 33,000 soldiers had become casualties without achieving a breach in the Siegfried Line.

According to the U.S. Army's official history, "The real winner appeared to be the vast, undulating blackish-green sea that virtually negated American superiority in air, artillery, and armor to reduce warfare to its lowest common denominator." Given the terrible cost, it seems clear that Maj. Gen. James Gavin might have been more correct when he said, "For us the Hürtgen was one of the most costly, most unproductive, and most ill-advised battles that our army has ever fought."

Mark Reardon is a historian at the U.S. Army Center of Military History.

**Fourth Annual Meeting of the Sons, Daughters and Grandchildren of the American
And German Veterans of the Battle Hürtgen Forest 2018**

Wednesday, October 3, 2018

Arrival and check in to your hotels. Smaller tours into the Hürtgen today.

Thursday, October 4, 2018

11:00 a. m. Meeting at Hotel Rotes Einhorn. Introduction of the participants. Presentation of Day 1 – the event schedule. PowerPoint presentation and lecture. Dinner at noon.

3:30 p. m. Coffee break program

7:00 p. m. Dinner at night; cozy sit in

Friday, October 5, 2018

8:00 a. m. Bus excursion: Stolberg Corridor, Siegfried Line, Roetgen, Rott, Stolberg, Mausbach

1:00 p. m. Dinner at noon

2:00 p. m. Todtenbruch, Hill 554, Kesternich, Museum Vossenack (continued on page 12)

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THE OCTOFOIL

**801 W. 232nd St. #3M
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Return Service Requested

Saturday, October 6, 2018

8:00 a. m.

Bus excursion to Diekirch/Luxembourg. We will visit the Museum of the Battle of the Bulge at Diekirch Kirk and will drive along the former front lines with several stops at historical sites. Our tour guides for this day: Roland Gaul and Dough Mitchell. Dinner and coffee breaks during the tour and at Diekirch

Sunday, October 7, 2018

8:00 AM

Bus excursion to the Belgian Fortress of Eben Emael south of Maastricht with a guided tour through the fortress. Eben Emael was one of the strongest fortresses in Belgium. It was taken on May 10, 1940 by 70 German paratroopers. 800 Belgian soldiers were captured. In the afternoon sightseeing in Maastricht and cruise on the Meuse River. Memorial service at the American Cemetery at Margraten.

6:00 PM

Dinner at night

Monday, October 8 and Tuesday, October 9, 2018 Excursions with smaller groups to special sites and places like the city of Aachen, Eilendorf, Verlautenheide, Remagen Bridge, Hürtgen Forest, etc.

Recommended hotels at Duren:

Hotel Jagerhof	www.jaeger-dueren.de
Duren's Posthotel	www.posthotel-dueren.de
Hotel Rotes Einhorn	www.nu.rotes-einhorn.de
Stadthotel Duren	www.mein-domizil-hotel.de
Hotel Arnoldusklausen	www.hotel-arnoldusklausen.de

Airports for arrival and departure:

Frankfurt	Rhein/Main Airport
Düsseldorf	Rhine/Rohr Airport
Kohl/Bonn	Konrad – Adenauer Airport

All airports have a railroad station. From there you can take the train to Duren.

**For additional information, please contact Terry Barnhart,
Ninth Infantry Division Association President.**

